

# Iowa Council on Homelessness Facts

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The primary mission of the Iowa Council on Homelessness is to:

- identify causes and effects of homelessness in Iowa and develop recommendations to address homelessness,
- foster greater awareness among policy makers and the general public, and
- ensure all Iowans have access to safe, decent and affordable housing, health care and education.

In carrying out this mission, the Council seeks to increase public awareness and education about homelessness through various means including providing:

- information and tools for everyday Iowans to make a difference in the lives of the homeless, and
- ongoing information, tools and resources to State Legislators on how to positively impact homelessness.

## Facts:

"It was determined through a homeless service count for 2006 that **19,233 people in Iowa** were provided assistance through Iowa's homeless service network.

56% of homeless families experienced homelessness for the first time in 2006.

1 out of 10 homeless adult individuals served in the Armed Forces.

**11,141 Iowans** under the age of 18 needed assistance and were provided services in 2006.

58% of homeless people in families are children.

4 out of 10 homeless Iowans are children.

59% of adults in families have completed high school or received their G.E.D.

½ of homeless adult individuals report a long term disability.

**An additional 9,864 Iowans** were at risk of becoming homeless and were served by Iowa's homeless service network to prevent homelessness in 2006."<sup>1</sup>

## Perspective:

"29,075 people were homeless or near homeless in 2006 and were served by a reporting agency which is similar to the entire population of Mason City, our 15<sup>th</sup> largest city,

or

if the entire population of Coralville lost their homes.

## Why Should We Care?

**Costs** – Homeless people are involved in more "systems" and more assistance is required due to the difficulties that come with being homeless.

**Education** – Estimates indicate that three to six months of education are lost every time a child moves. Homeless families often move several times before finding permanent housing.

**Health** – Without stable housing, pre-existing conditions are aggravated, routine health care is ignored and high risks of catastrophic health problems increase.

**The right things to do** – Iowans have a tradition of stepping up to help those in need. Assisting those with the least improves their situation and improves the quality of life for all of us.

## Main Reason for Homelessness:

- Economic/Housing Issues

## How can you as a Legislator assist individuals and families who are homeless?

By supporting:

- Safe, Affordable Housing
- Affordable and Universal Health Care
- Support Services for all

For more information on homelessness see the Iowa Council on Homelessness web page at the following link:

[http://www.iowafinanceauthority.gov/en/for\\_communities\\_housing\\_org/homelessness/](http://www.iowafinanceauthority.gov/en/for_communities_housing_org/homelessness/)

<sup>1</sup>Excerpts taken from the report to the Governor of the State of Iowa on behalf of the Iowa Council on Homelessness entitled, "Iowans Experiencing Homelessness Annual Snapshot of Service and Shelter Use" prepared by the Iowa Institute for Community Alliances, January-December 2006.